What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method, comprising the steps of:

2   receiving, with a client, data from a network in a distributed system;

3   specifying with said client a minimum length of time during which the received

4   data is to be temporarily stored; and

5   storing temporarily at least a portion of the received data.

1   2.   A method according to claim 1, wherein the received data is stored in a memory

2   space accessible by the client as cache.

1   3.   A method according to claim 2, wherein said received data is stored in a non-

2   volatile memory.

1   4.   A method according to claim 3, wherein the receiving step is via the Internet.

1   5.   A method according to claim 1, wherein the receiving step comprises retrieving

2   data of a Web page.

1   6.   A method according to claim 1, wherein the temporarily stored data comprises

2   data in text, graphics, sound, video, or applet format.

1   7.   A method according to claim 1, further including the step of designating, with

2   said client, that the received data be temporarily stored, wherein the designating step

3   includes a step of presenting a user with a window for user input.

1   8.   A method according to claim 7, wherein the specifying step is carried out by a

2   user in real time.

1   9.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of reading an

2   instruction provided with the received data, wherein the instruction indicates that the

3   received data should be temporarily stored.

1   10.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of deleting the data

2   after the specified minimum length of time.

1   11.   A method according to claim 1, wherein the data is a first Web page containing a

2   hyperlink to a second Web page and the storing step includes storing data of the second

3   Web page.

1   12.   A method, comprising the step of storing Web page data temporarily in a cache

2   for a user specified time period.

1   13.   A method according to claim 12, wherein said data is stored to conserve cache

2   storage space and to ensure that the user may retrieve the data within the user-selected

3   time period.

1   14.   A client, comprising:

2   a central processing unit;

3   an input device coupled to said central processing unit;

4   an output device coupled to said central processing unit; and

5   a memory space operatively coupled to said central processing unit for storing

6   data,

7   the client being configured to temporarily store data downloaded from a network

8   for a user specified minimum period of time, after which period of time the stored data is

9   subject to automatic deletion.

1   15.   A client according to claim 14, wherein the memory space is a cache memory

2   space.

1   16.   A client according to claim 14, wherein the memory space is a nonvolatile

2   memory.

1   17.   A client according to claim 14, wherein the client is further configured to respond

2   to a user request to display information about the stored data.

1   18.   A client according to claim 17, wherein the client is further configured to respond

2   to a user request to modify a property of the stored data.

1   19.   A client according to claim 14, wherein the stored data is data from one or more

2   Web site images.

1   20.   A system, comprising:

2   a client configured to temporarily store data received from a server for a user-

3   specified minimum period of time, to provide user access when said data is not available

4   from said server,

5   said client being further configured to delete said data after expiration of said

6   user-specified minimum period of time, to recover memory space over time.